THE LADY EVELYN

A Story of Today

BY MAX PEMBERTON

What did her father mean by wishing her to be gracious to Count Odin? Had he so changed in a night that he would sacrifice his only daughter to atone for some wrong committed in his own boyhood? Her passionate nature could resent the mere idea as one too shameful to contemplate. But what did it mean then, and how would she stand if the Count presumed upon her father's acquiescence? The fascination which this stranger exercised did not deceive her; she knew it for the spell of evil, to be resisted with all her heart and soul. Was she strong enough, had she character enough, to resist it? She would be alone against them both if the worst befell, she remembered, and would fight her battle unaided. Others might have been dismayed, but not Evelyn, the daughter of Dora d'Istran. She was grateful perhaps that her father had declared his preference so openly. A veiled hostility toward their guest might have provoked her to show him civilities which were asked of her no longer. As it was, she understood her position and could prepare for it.

To this point her reverie had carried her when she became aware that she was no longer alone. A rustling of leaves, a twig snapping upon the bank, brought her instantly to a recognition of the fact that some one watched her hiding-place behind the willows of the pool. Whoever the intruder might be, he withdrew when she looked up, and his face remained undiscovered. Evelyn resented this intrusion greatly, and was about to move away when some one, hidden by the trees, began to play a zither very sweetly, and to this the music of a guitar and a fiddle were added presently, and then the pleasing notes of a human voice. Pushing her canoe out into the stream, Evelyn could just espy a red scarf flashing between the trees and, from time to time, the dark face of a true son of Egypt. Who these men were or why they thus defied her privacy, she could not so much as hazard; nor did she any longer resent their temerity. The weird, wild music made a strange appeal to her. It awakened impulses and ideas she had striven to subdue; inspired her imagination to old ideals—excited and troubled her as no music she had heard before. The same mad courage which sent her to London to play upon the stage of a theatre returned to her and filled her with an inexplicable ecstasy. She had all the desire to trample down the conventions which stifled her liberty and to let the world think as it would. Etta Romney came back to life and being in that moment—Etta speaking to Evelyn and saying, "This is a message of the joy of life, listen, for it is the voice of Destiny."

The music ceased upon a weird chord in a minor key; and, when it had died away, Evelyn became aware that the men were talking in a strange tongue and secretly, and that they still had no intention of declaring their presence. With the passing of the spell of sweet sounds, she found herself not without a little alarmed curiosity to learn who they were and by whom they had been permitted to wander abroad in the park, apparently unquestioned and unknown. Disquiet, indeed, would have sent her to the house again, but for the appearance of no other than Count Odin himself, who came without warning to the water's edge and laughed at her evident perplexity.

"My fellows annoy you, dear lady," he said. "Pray let me make the excuses for them. You do not like their music—is it not so?"

"Not at all, I like it very much," she said, not weighing her words. "It is the maddest music I ever heard in all my life."

"Then come and tell young Zallony so. I brought him to England, Lady Evelyn. I mean to make his fortune. Come and see him and tell him if London will not like him when he scrapes the fiddle in a lady's ear. It would be gracious of you to do that—these poor fellows would die if you English ladies did not clap the hands for them. Come and be good to young Zallony and he will never forget."

He helped her ashore with his left hand, for his right he carried in a silken scarf, the last remaining witness to his accident. His dress was a well-fitting suit of gray flannels, with a faint blue stripe upon them. He had the air and manner of a man who denied himself no luxury and was perfectly well aware of the fascination he exercised upon the majority of women he met, whatever their nationality. Had Evelyn been questioned she would have said that his eyes were the best gift with which Nature had dowered him. Of the darkest gray, soft and languishing in a common way, they could, when passion dominated them, look into the very soul of the chosen victim and leave it almost helpless before their steadfast gaze. To this a soldier's carriage was to be added; the grand air of a man born in the East and accustomed to be obeyed.

"This is Zallony," he said with a tinge of pride in his voice, "also the son of a man with whom your father was very well acquainted in his younger days. Command him and he will fiddle for you. There are a hundred ladies in Bukharest who are, at all times, ready to die for him. He comes to England and spares their lives. Admit his generosity, dear lady. He will be very kind to you for my sake."

Zallony was a Romany of Romanies, a tall, dark-eyed gypsy, slim and graceful, and a musician in every thought and act of his life. He wore a dark suit of serge, a broad-brimmed hat, and a bright blue scarf about his waist. With him were three others; one a very old man dressed in a bizarre fashion of the East, and at no pains to adapt it to the conventions of the West; the rest, dark-visaged, far from amiable-looking fellows, who might never have smiled in all their lives. Zallony remained a prince among them. He bowed low to Evelyn and instantly struck up a lively air, which the others took up with that nerve and spirit so characteristic of Eastern musicians. When they had finished, Evelyn found herself thanking them warmly. They had no English, and could only answer her with repeated smiles.

"How did these people come here?" she asked the Count, as they began to walk slowly toward the woods.

His reply found him once more telling the truth and astounded, perhaps, at the ease of a strange employment.

"By the railway and the sea, Lady Evelyn. They are my watch-dogs—you would call them that in England. Oh, yes, I am a timid traveller. I like to hear these fellows barking in the woods. So much they love me that if I were in prison they would pull down the walls to get me out. Your father, my lord, does not forbid them to pitch their tents in his park. Why should he? I am his guest and shall be a long time in this country, perhaps. These fellows are not accustomed to live in houses. Dig them a cave and they will make themselves happy—they are sons of tents and the hills; men who know how to live and how to die. The story of Roumania has written the name of Zallony's father in golden letters. He fought for our country against the Russians who would have stolen our liberty from us. To this day the Ministry at Petersburg would hang his son if he was so very foolish as to visit that unfortunate country. Truly, Zallony has many who love him not—he is fortunate, Lady Evelyn, that your father is not among the number."

He meant her to ask him a question and she did not flinch from it.

"Why should my father have any opinions upon the matter? Are these people known to him also?"

"My dear lady, in Roumania, twenty years ago, the bravest men, the biggest hearts, were at Zallony's command. His regiment of hussars was the finest that the world has ever seen. Bukharest made it a fashion to send young men secretly to its ranks. The name of Zallony stood for a brotherhood of men not soldiers only, but those sworn to fidelity upon the Cross; to serve each other faithfully, to hold all things in common—the poor devils, how little they had to hold!—such were Zallony's hussars. Lady, your father and my father served together in the ranks; they took a common oath—they rode the hills, lived wild nights on desolate mountains, shared good fortune and ill, until an unlucky day when a woman came between them and brotherhood was no more. I was such a little fellow then that I could not lift the sword they put into my hands; but they filled my body up with wine and I rode my pony after them, many a day that shall never be forgotten. This is to tell you that my mother, a little wild girl of the Carpathians, died the year I was born. Her I do not remember—a thing to be regretted for who may say what a mother's memory may not do for that man who will let it be his guiding star. I did not know her, Lady Evelyn. When they carried my father to prison, the priests took charge of me and filled my head with their stories of peace and good-will—the head of one who had ridden with Zallony on the hills and heard the call to arms as soon as he could anything at all. They told me that my father was dead—five years ago I learned that he lived. Lady Evelyn, he is a prisoner, and I have come to England to give him liberty."

He looked at her, waiting for a second question, nor did she disappoint him.

"Can my father help you to do that, Count."

"My dear lady, consider his position. An English noble, bearing his honored name; the master of great riches—what cannot he do if he will? Let him say but one word to my Government and the affair is done. I shall see my dear father again—the world will be a new world for me. My lord has but to speak."

"Is it possible that he could hesitate?"

"All things are possible where human folly is concerned."

"Then there would be a reason, Count?"

"And a consequence, Lady Evelyn."

"Oh," she said quickly, "you are not frank with me even now."

"So frank that I speak to you as I never spoke to another in all my life. You are the only person in England who can help me and help your father to do well. I have asked him for the liberty of a man who never did him a wrong. He has refused to answer me, yes or no. Why should I tell you that delay is dangerous? If I am silent a little while, do you not guess that it is for your sake that I am silent? These things are rarely hidden from clever women. Say that Count Odin has learned to be a lover and you will question me no more."

They were in a lonely glade, dark with the shade of beeches, when he made this apparently honest declaration; and he stood before her forbidding her to advance further or to avoid his entreaty. Her confusion, natural to her womanhood, he interpreted in its true light. "She does not love me, but there is that in her blood which will give me command over her," he said. And this was the precise truth. Evelyn had, from the first, been fully aware of the strange spell this man could put upon her. His presence seemed to her as that of the figure of evil beckoning her to wild pleasures and forbidden gardens of delight. Strong as her will was, this she could not combat. And she shrank from him, helpless, and yet aware of his power.

"You are speaking to me of grave things," she said quietly. "My own feelings must not enter into them. If my father owes this debt to you, he shall pay it. I will be no part of the price, Count Odin."

"Cara mia," he said, taking both her hands and trying to draw her close to him, "I care not how it is if you shall say you love me. Do not hide the truth from yourself. Your father is in great danger. You can save him from the penalties of wrong. Will you refuse to do so because I love you—love you as I have never believed a man could love; love you as my father loved your mother so many years ago—with the love of a race that has fought for women and died for them; a race which is deaf when a woman says no, which follows her, cara mia, to the end of the earth and has eyes for nothing else but the house which shelters her? Will you do this when your heart can command me as you will—saying, speak or be silent, forget or remember? I know you better; you love me, Evelyn; you are afraid to tell me, but you love me. That is why I remain a prisoner of this house—because you love me, and I shall make you my wife. Ah, cara mia, say it but once—I love you, Georges, the son of my father's friend—I love you and will not forbid your words."

A strange thrill ran through Evelyn's veins as she listened to this passionate declaration. The frenzied words of love did not deceive her. This man, she thought, would so speak to many a woman in the years to come. A better wit would have concealed his purpose and rendered him less frank. "He would sell his father's liberty at my bidding," she said, and the thought set her struggling in his arms, flushed with anger and with shame.

"I will not hear you, Count," she cried again and again. "I cannot love you—you are not of my people. If my father has done wrong, he shall repay. He is not so helpless that he cannot save me from this. Oh, please let me go, your hands hurt me. I can never be your wife, never, never!"

He released her reluctantly, for his quick ear had caught the sound of a horse galloping upon the open grass beyond the thicket.

"You will answer me differently another day," he said smilingly; "meanwhile, cara mia, there are two secrets to keep—yours and mine. If the charming Lady Evelyn will not hear me, I must remember Etta Romney, a young lady of my acquaintance—ah, you know her too; and that is well for her. Let us return to the house. My lord will have much to say to me and I to him."

They went up to the Hall together in silence. Evelyn knew how much she was in his power and how idle her veiled threats had been.

She could save her father from this man—truly. But at what a price!

"Etta Romney would marry him," she said bitterly; "but I—Evelyn—God help me to be true to myself!"

CHAPTER XVI.

A Game of Golf.

Golf at Moretown is "by favor of the Lord of the Manor" played across a corner of the home park, so remote from Melbourne Hall that you have a vista of that fine old house but rarely from the trees, and nowhere at all if you be an ardent player.

Such a description could in all sincerity have been applied to either of our old friends Dr. Philips and the Rev. Harry Fillimore, the vicar of the parish. They played the game as though all their worldly hope depended upon it. The best of friends at common times, difficulty could provoke them to such violent hostilities that they did not speak a word to each other until the after-luncheon glass of port had been slowly sipped. Intimate in their knowledge each of the other, the Vicar knew exactly when to cough that the Doctor's forcible exclamations might not be overheard by the caddies. The Doctor, upon his part, sympathized very cordially with the Vicar when that worthy found himself in a bunker.

These being the circumstances of the weekly duel a outrance, it certainly was astonishing to discover the Vicar and the Doctor talking of another subject but golf on a day of July some three weeks after Count Odin's arrival at Melbourne Hall. Strange to say, however, they discussed neither the merits of the but nor the doubtful wisdom of running up approach; but playing their strokes with some indifference as to the attending consequences, they spoke of my lord of Melbourne and of the turn affairs at the Hall were taking. To be entirely candid, the Vicar left the main part of the talk to the Doctor; for the secret which he carried he had as yet no courage to tell to anyone.

"Most extraordinary—not the same man, sir, by twenty years. If he were a woman, I would call it neurasthenia and back my opinion for a Haskell. What do you think of a sane human being letting a lot of dirty gypsies have the free run of the Hall; in and out like rabbits in a warren—drinking his best wines and riding his horses, and lots more besides that the servants hint at but won't talk about? Why, they tell me that he's up half the night with the scum sometimes, as wild as the rest of them when they fiddle and caper in the Long Gallery. What's common sense to make of it? What do you make of it, leaving common sense out of the matter?"

The Vicar looked somewhat askance at the dubious compliment; nor did it encourage him to tell of the strange sights he had seen in Melbourne Park some twelve hours before this epoch-making encounter.

"I hear the men are Roumanians," he said, taking a brussie from his bag and making an atrocious shot with it. "Of course the Earl—this is miserable—the Earl was in Roumania as a young man. Perhaps he is returning some courtesy these wild fellows showed to him. You play the odd, I think."

"Odd or the like, I don't care a—that is to say, it is most extraordinary. Why, they're bandits, Harry—bandits, I tell you, and, unless Mrs. Fillimore looks out, they'll carry her off to Matlock Tor and hold her out to ransom—perhaps while we're on the links. A pretty advertisement you'd get if that came off. A Vicar's wife stolen by brigands. The Reverend Gentleman on the Q. Tee. Think of it in the evening papers! How some of them would chaff you!"

The Vicar played an approach shot and said, "This is really deplorable." He would have preferred to talk golf; but the Doctor gave him no rest, and so he said presently:

"I wonder what Lady Evelyn thinks of it all? She went by me in the car yesterday and Bates was driving for her. Now, I've never seen that before. . . . God bless me, what a shocking stroke!"

He shook his head as the ball went skimming over the ground into the deepest and most terrible bunker on Moretown Links—the Doctor following it with that sympathetic if hypocritical gaze we turn upon an enemy's misfortunes. Impossible not to better such a miserable exhibition, he thought. Unhappy man, game of delight, the two were playing from the bunker together before a minute had passed!

"You and I would certainly do better at the mangle if this goes on," the Doctor exclaimed with honest conviction; "the third bunker I've found to-day. A man cannot be well who does that."

"Rheumatism, undoubtedly," the Vicar said slyly.

A boyish laugh greeted the thrust.

"Shall we call it curiosity? Hang the game! What does it matter? You put a bit of india-rubber into a flower-pot and think you are a better man than I am. But you're not. I'd play you any day for the poor-box. Let's talk of something else—Lady Evelyn, for instance."

"Will she marry him, Frederick?"

"Him—the sandy-haired foreigner with the gypsy friends?"

"Is there any other concerned?"

"Oh, don't ask me. Do I keep her pocketbook."

"I wish you did, my dear fellow. From every point of view, this marriage would be deplorable."

"From every point of view but that of the two people concerned, perhaps. She is a girl with a will of her own—do you think she would marry him if she didn't like him?"

"She might, from spite. There are better reasons, perhaps worse. You told me at their first meeting that you believed her to be in love with him."

"I was an idiot. Let's finish the round. The man will probably live to be hanged—what does it matter?"

"Well, if it doesn't matter to you, it matters to nobody. I'll tell you something queer—a thing I saw last night. It's been in my head all day. I'll tell you as we go to the next green."

They drove a couple of good balls and set out from the tee with lighter hearts. As they went, the Vicar unburdened himself of that secret which golf alone could have prevented him disclosing an hour ago.

TO BE CONTINUED

FINGER-PRINT GETS YEGGMAN

NEW YORK—When the cracksman who broke open the safe of a dress-goods company in New York recently got for his trouble bonds and cash to the value of forty-five thousand dollars he probably considered himself lucky. But he was careless enough to leave the impression of one hand on the top of the same, and this temporary forgetfulness was his undoing.

The police found the handprint and took photographs of it. The photographs were compared with the finger-print records at police headquarters, and the whorls, et cetera on the finger tips were seen to be identical with those of the first man recorded in the files—Caesar Cella alias Charley Corey, alias Charley Jordan.

Instead of lucky, Cella may well think himself very unlucky, for he was soon arrested and his record of seventeen previous convictions of safe burglary brought to the attention of the judge before whom he appeared. Three of these convictions were obtained since the passage of the law making possible the sentence of an habitual offender to life imprisonment, so Cella now sees ahead of him the probability of spending the remainder of his days behind prison bars.

SPIDER-WEB NETS

ONE OF THE GREATEST CURIOSITIES FOUND IN NEW GUINEA

HUGE SPIDERS' WEBS ARE WOVEN INTO SUBSTANTIAL NETS OF GREAT RESISTING POWER. — HOW THEY USE THEM

Fishing nets made of spiders webs have been reported many times by travellers in New Guinea and other South Sea Islands, but the world was inclined to be sceptical. However, Prof E. W. Gudger of the State Normal College, Greensboro, N. C., assembles in the Zoological Society Bulletin so much testimony as to the truth of the travellers' stories that a scepticism must give way.

The following is one of the accounts. It is quoted in the Literary Digest from "Two Years Among New Guinea Cannibals," by E. A. Pratt:

"One of the greatest curiosities that I noted during my stay in New Guinea was the spiderweb fishing net. In the forest at this point (Wale, near Yule Bay), huge spiders' webs, six feet in diameter, abounded. They were woven in a large mesh, varying from one inch square at the outside of the web to about one-eight inch at the centre. The web was most substantial, and had great resisting power, a fact of which the natives were not slow to avail themselves, for they have pressed into the service of man this spider, which is about the size of a small hazel nut, with hairy, dark-brown legs, spreading to about two inches. This diligent creature they have beguiled into weaving their fishing-nets. At the place where the webs are thickest they set up long bamboos, bent over in a loop at the end. In a very short time the spider weaves a web on this most convenient frame and the Papuan has his fishing net, ready to his hand.

"He goes down to the stream and uses it with great dexterity to catch fish of about one pound in weight, neither the water nor the fish sufficing to break the mesh. The usual practice is to stand on a rock in backwater where there is an eddy. There they watch for a fish, and then dexterously dip it up and throw it on the bank. Several men would set up bamboo so as to have nets ready all together, and would then arrange little fishing parties. It seemed to me that the substance of the web resisted water as readily as a duck's back."

CLEVER NOVELTY IN HOUSE DOORS

One of the exhibits at the Model Homes Exhibition recently held at London is a door of novel construction, which has been patented in Great Britain under the name of "The Receivador," writes Leroy Webber, United States Vice Consul at Nottingham, England. The door is a double one, and is constructed with compartments into which tradesmen may insert parcels without disturbing the occupier of the premises. Inside the house another door gives access to the compartments, and the mechanical feature of the contrivance is the alternating interlock, a clever device which makes it mechanically impossible for both the outer and the inner door to be open or unlocked at one and the same time.

When the tradesman, after inserting his package, closes the outer door of the compartment and turns the knob, this action automatically locks the outer door and unlocks the inner door. When the occupier removes the package and closes the inner door, the latter in the same manner is locked and the outer door unlocked. The doors and locks are being manufactured in Nottingham, and the inventor claims that his idea completely revolutionizes shop-to-home delivery service.

The patentee, Jackson Mitchell, an American citizen at present residing in Nottingham, has already made application for patent rights in the United States.

SHEER FORESIGHT

A hard-working farmer in Ohio had sent his son to a good school of music so that he might receive the best instruction from the beginning. It was necessary to buy a violin for him, but he was such a little chap that his teacher thought that a so-called "half-violin would do. The father, whose recources had been badly taxed, was loath to part with the money for the instrument, but finally did so.

The lad made rapid progress, and became so proficient that a half-violin was no longer good enough for him. Again he went to the music-store with his father, to whom the salesman showed the entire stock of violins. The parent was apparently dissatisfied with all of them, and his gaze wandered round the shop seeking for something better. Finally he saw a violincello.

"We'll take the big violin there," said he, as a smile of satisfaction spread over his countenance. "The boy won't outgrow that right way!"

—Harper's Magazine.

UNIVERSITY FOR DETECTIVES

The Italian Government Undertakes The Training Of Men For Detective-Work.

ROME, Italy.—Scuola Di Polizia Scientifica, or Scientific Police School, is the name given to the establishment in Rome where men are trained in modern detective methods. Italy's police system is a national constabulary conducted on military lines, but directed by civilians—the members of the Division of Public Security.

In order to enter the Scientific Police School a man must have studied law for at least two years. Many of the candidates are graduates of universities who have specialized in sociology, criminal law, and kindred subjects. The detective course comprises four month's instruction in dactyloscopy, or finger-print reading, record keeping, penal law, the psychology of criminals, their motives and methods, and cross-examination.

In the school building are located the criminal files for the entire country, so that the students have ample material on which to work in pursuing their course. This makes the work of the school extremely practical. The finger-print bureau was organized on its present basis in 1908, and, under normal conditions, has additions of fifteen hundred monthly. A feature of the Italian finger-print records is the inclusion, whenever possible, of the impressions of Italian subjects arrested for crimes in foreign lands.